

S A I N T L O U I S B I R D C L U B B U L L E T I N

Official Organ of the Saint Louis Bird Club
for the Protection of
Bird Enjoyment, Bird Study, and Bird Conservation

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Number 8

THE NOVEMBER MEETING

The next meeting of the Saint Louis Bird Club will be held at Soldan High School in room 320—the same meeting place as last time. As usual the meeting will be held on the third Wednesday of the month, the twenty-first.

This will be the last meeting of the year inasmuch as no meeting will be held in December.

Moving pictures of Hummingbirds and other unusual shots will be shown and the Executive Committee will try to secure the talents of some guest speaker if at all possible.

-r.a.d.

THE NOVEMBER BIRD WALK

Our next hike will take place on November 18th. At the last meeting the Bird Club decided to hold a fall hike on that date and the matter was referred to the Executive Committee which decided on the rustic and natural Saint Albans Farms. Mrs. Johnson has invited us to make a bird trip over her extensive estates along the Missouri River.

Among the unusual things we may see are the wild Turkeys which have been successfully introduced there. In other respects also the farms offer unparalleled opportunities for nature study. Various types of country are available for exploration - high cliffs, rolling meadows, dense woods, brushy thickets, and pasture lands.

To get there go out the Manchester Road beyond Pond and turn right on the Melrose Road and follow the signs to Saint Albans Farms and Barn Inn. Plan to be
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FIELD MARKS AND FIELD HABITS OF OUR WOODPECKERS

As the winter season now approaches and most summer birds have left us, our chances of observation seem to be curtailed. However the woodpeckers remain with us all winter and thus enable us during that time to study them when we are not distracted by the appearance of the migrants. I hope this article will stimulate interest in this genus made up as it is for the most part of common permanent residents easily observed at all times.

The Downy Woodpecker. Although he is the smallest of the Picidae family, yet he is the most congenial, both in respect to other birds and in respect to human beings. One usually finds him keeping company with titmice, nut-hatches, or brown creepers. Yet he does not waste time but is always industriously looking for food among the smaller branches of the treetops or in small trees and shrubs near the ground. He is the one who looks after the farmers' orchards in winter, to insure him of a bountiful crop the next fall. By his sharp "pik" or a long rapid series of the same note descending the scale he makes his presence known to us, and as we approach to get a better look at him, he does not immediately fly away, but tries to hide from us behind a tree trunk. Then perhaps we can get close enough to observe that his outer tail feathers are white with two heavy bars across the bottom portion. This feature, in addition to his much smaller size, distinguishes him from the Hairy Woodpecker, whose
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SAINT LOUIS BIRD CLUB BULLETIN

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Tom
 Tom Kirksey who has edited the Observation Department of our bulletin exceptionally well for some time will be unable to serve in that capacity after the issue of the December bulletin, inasmuch as he contemplates an extensive stay in California.

His successor will be named in the next bulletin.

In this connection we would acknowledge the article of November second which appeared in the Saint Louis Star Times reviewing an address by Tom Kirksey before the Rotary Club. We quote a few lines: "An average of fifty birds a year are killed by each cat in America....In Dallas, Texas, and Coronado Beach, California, local ordinances have been passed requiring every cat to wear a bell.Similar precautions should be made in every town.....The American Osprey or fish hawk learned about stream lining hundreds of years before the automobile builders and railroad men. After it has risen from the surface of the water with a fish in its

(Continued on page 104)

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

The November meeting will be the last official meeting of this year. Consequently it should be the duty of every member, who can possibly do so, to be present and make this a very successful meeting.

It is the best thing for the club to have all of its members vitally interested and "itching" to have some part in the things that are taking place. One way to obtain this result is to give each and every member who comes to meetings a chance to take part and the oftener he or she can "speak out in the meeting," the more chance for holding his or her respective interests.

Sometime during the evening I am going to call for suggestions for the good of the order and therefore come primed with your pet ideas, suggestions, "crabs," or what will you.

Now for a little warning, please do not read this column, shrug your shoulders, mutter under your breath, and forget about it. Come to the next meeting and do your stuff there.

Dr. D. M. Hetler

THE CHRISTMAS CENSUS

The Christmas census to be held in cooperation with the Audubon Society will take place the thirtieth of December. The place will be the Creve Coeur region which owing to its peculiar nature affords the very best protection to wintering birds. The plan is to meet at the boathouse on the lake promptly at 9 A. M. and cover the territory as thoroughly as possible, listing all the specimens seen as well as the number of individuals of each species together with any peculiarities of action or song which may be observed.

The object is not to get a large list but a complete and scientifically accurate one. The winter birds present no particular difficulties of determination of species; yet there is always the chance that

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

We have received the following information from the National Association of Audubon Societies: "The Board of Directors wishes to announce that at the request of Dr. T. Gilbert Pearson he has been relieved of the executive responsibilities of President of the Association, and on October 30, 1934, was elected to the position of President Emeritus. For thirty-two years he has devoted his time to wild-life preservation and for the past twenty-four years he has been the executive head of the National Association of Audubon Societies.

Dr. Pearson will continue to serve the Association's interests, devoting his time to its international activities, lecturing, writing, helping in legislative effort, and aiding in spreading the Association's policies of wild-life protection.

Mr. Kermit Roosevelt was elected President and Mr. John H. Baker, who has been since December, 1933, Chairman of the Board of Directors, was elected Executive Director."

DUES NOTICE

Miss Golterman calls attention to the fact that dues for the current year will expire in December and suggests that Club members send in their remittances as soon as is possible.

PERSONALIA

Mr. Barger the former editor of this bulletin has been residing for some time past in Madison, Wisconsin. He sends greetings to all his friends of the Bird Club. His address has been changed to 421 Washburn Place, Madison, Wisconsin.

We include a small excerpt from a letter send to your editor: "I have noticed Loons, Coots, Pied-billed Grebes, and a few unidentified ducks flying over. The American Egrets were well represented here as were the Great Blue Herons this past season. Black Terns are numerous."

EXCHANGES

Webster Groves NATURE NOTES (November) contains a very instructive article on the essential difference between ornithological clubs and bird clubs in which Mr. S. P. Jones quotes from an address by the late Otto Widmann before the Naturalist's Club in 1916 as follows: "Ornithological clubs are made up of bird students. Bird clubs...are composed of people who love birds without trying to get intimately acquainted with them; bird lovers or bird friends who are awakened by the threatening scarcity of wild birds to do something to protect them and to attract birds to localities now deserted. Most of the members of a bird club are satisfied with knowing a few of the commoner birds and their habits, but have no time or opportunity or inclination to make a study of ornithology..."

"The aim of a bird club is not so much the study of ornithology as the preservation of bird life generally; and chiefly the attraction of birds to places not now frequented by them...It is an accepted fact that what the individual bird lover cannot attain, an association of citizens under good leadership may accomplish; such as erection of bird boxes in public parks and cemeteries, etc."

The RAVEN, bulletin of the Virginia Society of Ornithology, describes how a pair of wrens located their nest under a wall clock, on a desk, anchored between some books and two sheets placed there for use on the morrow.

The paper also contains an interesting account of the activities of a pair of Cooper's Hawks and the usual field notes.

The CHICKADEE, of the Forbush Bird Club, Worcester, Mass., gives a fine article on "Migration and Distribution," offers a very complete list of bird observations, and contains notes on field trips.

(Continued next column)

EXCHANGES (Continued)

BULLETIN OF THE MASSACHUSETTS AUDUBON SOCIETY (October) tells of an energetic robin attacking and killing a ten inch snake. The robin in this case was obviously inverting the usual order of things.

SIOUX CITY BIRD STUDY REVIEW has appeared in its first issue. It is edited by R. D. Hissong and chronicles the affairs of Sioux City bird enthusiasts. We hope the publication will have a long and successful life and contribute greatly to bird protection and the pleasure of its subscribers.

-r.a.d.

NEW PUBLICATIONS

BIRD PORTRAITS IN COLOR, by T. S. Roberts, contains ninety-two full page illustrations, unsurpassed in brilliancy and accuracy of color. The plates are reproductions of water color paintings of Brooks, Sutton, Weber, Jaques, Breckenridge, and Fuertes. Two hundred and ninety-five species, 561 major figures, are shown in the plates. Thus most of the birds common to the North American continent east of the Rocky Mountains are included. A unique feature of the illustrations is the range of plumage presented - male and female, immature and seasonal. The plates are from The Birds of Minnesota with a page of text opposite each plate. The book sells for \$3.50 and may be obtained from the University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, Minnesota, or through local book shops.

THE AUDUBON CALENDAR, 1935, is now available. It is published by the Massachusetts Audubon Society and contains six accurate 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ X 13 color plates of these birds - Chickadee, Bluebird, Nighthawk, Hummingbird, Osprey, and Herring Gull. It makes a unique and attractive gift calendar. If you are interested, write to our secretary, Miss Golterman.

EXPERIENCES OF MEMBERS DURING THE SUMMER

The results of the last meeting were so interesting that the highlights will be repeated here for the benefit of those members who were prevented by the rainy weather from attending the meeting.

In the absence of the usual speaker the meeting was given over to recounting the various experiences our members have had. The meeting brought out one fact very strongly - that the most commonplace happenings can be very interesting.

Dr. Hetler broke the ice with some observations he made in the east this summer. He described the activities of gulls and terns over Lake Erie fighting each other for their food, the silvery minnows. Sanderlings and various other species of sandpipers cleaned the beaches of refuse tossed up by the storms.

Mr. L. M. Weber told of the efforts of a pair of Grackles to build a nest. The pair in question were persecuted by another pair of grackles which took away the nesting material as fast as the first pair could collect it. After three weeks the nest was finally completed.

Mr. Mueller described the activities of an eagle which located in the heart of Chicago and succeeded in making its living by catching the many pigeons which frequent the heart of the Windy City. It was a rare sight for the city dwellers to observe this unusual bird so close to civilization.

Miss Golterman described her first sight of the Water Ouzel which she observed in a mountain stream, its favorite habitat, out west.

Mrs. Schwartz had many unusual experiences with birds right here in her home in University City. She described the domineering tactics of a Mockingbird at her

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THE NOVEMBER BIRD WALK
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at Barn Inn before 9:30. Or you may take the Rock Island Train which leaves the Union Station, 18th and Market, at eight o'clock and arrives at Saint Albans at 9:35 o'clock. -r.a.d.

EXPERIENCES OF MEMBERS
DURING THE SUMMER
(continued from page 103)

bird bath which succeeded in driving the other birds away and took sole possession.

Mr. S. P. Jones told of Screech Owls coming to the bird bath.

These have been but a sample of many other equally fine experiences with birds which our club members have had during the past summer.

-r.a.d.

THE CHRISTMAS CENSUS
(continued from page 101)

some stray visitor from the far north may have wandered south to the vicinity. Evening Grosbeaks were observed in the region last year and Bohemian Waxwings have also visited the locality. If a sufficient number of bird enthusiasts turn out, the party will be split into groups in order to cover the region more thoroughly. Several of our younger members are extremely well acquainted with the area and are ready to serve as reliable guides. -r.a.d.

TOM KIRKSEY RESIGNS

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claws, it heads the fish into the wind so that it will be easier to carry.....The hawk species, although considered harmful in many ways, has been estimated to benefit every farmer in the country to the extent of \$12 a year in the destruction of rodents."

We hope that Tom Kirksey who is planning eventually to continue the study of birds at Cornell under Dr. Arthur Allen will favor us with reports of his studies in California during his stay there. -r.a.d.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

Plans for the November hike were discussed (see front page), the date and place of the Christmas census were provisionally adopted (see page 101), plans for a Nature luncheon in December were discussed, and general business disposed of.

-r.a.d.

WOODPECKERS (continued)

outer tail feathers are pure white. If we also notice an absence of the red patch on the head, then we are observing a female downy.

The Hairy Woodpecker. In describing this woodpecker people often speak of him as a large Downy and they are partly right, for in appearance he is almost an enlarged duplicate of the Downy. However there are several ways of easily distinguishing them. First of all by the size, since the Hairy is two and one-half and even three inches longer than the Downy. To the sharp ear the calls are also different, the Hairy's being louder and more drawn out (peenk). His habitat is also different, since he frequents the heavy timber and is more retiring in his habits. Whereas Downy Woodpeckers are frequent visitors at feeding stations, the Hairy does not appear to trust man as much. The female of this species is also identified by the lack of the red patch on the head.

The Pileated Woodpecker. The large size of this woodpecker dispels any doubt in identification, since he is about as large as a crow. But there are other features in which he differs from most of his species. His flight is not regularly undulating as that of most woodpeckers, but level and sometimes interspersed with sailing. Only in flight does one observe the great white patches in his wings. Already from a distance one can recognize him by his call, which is Flicker-like but louder and more hesitant. At close (continued on page 105)

WOODPECKERS (continued)

range his red crest and crimson cheeks give him a majestic appearance. His mate lacks the crimson cheeks and also has less red on the crown. The nest is sometimes three feet deep, the preparation of which occupies a month's time. The entrance is usually rectangular. When we come upon this bird in his habitat, the heavily wooded areas, we find him to be almost void of the fear of men and then of course our observations are easily made.

The Red-headed Woodpecker. Much need not be said about this bird, because he is so universally known. The sexes are alike and live up to their name, Red-headed. However, the young differ very much in that their head, neck, and upper chest are gray or toward brown. This species is more often seen in open fields and prefers dead tons of forest trees or burnt over woodlands. In flight the white wing-patches are usually the best mark.

The Red-bellied Woodpecker. The, name Zebra-back would fit this bird better than Red-bellied, for it seems that the latter is a misnomer. Very little red is apparent on the belly but his head and the back of his neck are a decided crimson. The female has no crimson on the crown, but only on the back of the neck. Its harsh, brassy sound, if once learned, is a very sure means of identification.

The Flicker. Like the Downy, the Yellow Hammer enjoys company and is often found with Robins, Blue-birds, and English Sparrows. His white spot on the rump is the usual way of identification. The male shows a black cheek mark upon close observation which mature females lack, but which young females often indicate. His food consists largely of ants.

The Arctic Three-toed Woodpecker. The name is very significant since all other woodpeckers have four toes. His habitat is the far (continued next column)

north, but he comes within our range at times during the winter and is usually found in belts of spruce and balsam or in burnt-over areas. In general he may be described thus: A black-backed bird with a yellow or orangeish crown and white under-parts barred with black. In seeking its food, it strips off the bark of trees rather than drilling into them. Then also it has the peculiar habit of taking away the bark of the trees for quite an area about its nesting hole. In general it is quiet when at work but sometimes makes its presence known by uttering shrill harsh cries. Like the other woodpeckers it lacks fear to a great extent and therefore may be closely studied.

The Yellow-bellied Sapsucker. In one respect this bird is in a class by himself. He is the only really harmful woodpecker. Many trees annually die because of his work. He includes maples, popular, birches, pines, fruit trees, and even various vines although the evergreens seem to be preferred. In securing the bulk of his food, especially in the spring, he will drill several rows or rings of holes around the trees in order to get at the sap. Immediately the trees begin to "bleed" and the bird laps up the sap with his especially suited tongue. This he will often do for hours and finally becomes "drunk" on the sap. The tree of course loses this valuable nutrition and if it is completely girdled, it will die. This bird is easily recognized by his bright red crown and throat patch and by his yellowish belly. The females lack the red throat patch and often also the red crown, since immature birds have a black crown.

To these facts could be added many more interesting points of less importance but if this article has served to incite your observations of all our winter birds I am sure these other details will be added by your own efforts and many interesting and pleasing experiences will result. -Carl Selle

FIELD OBSERVATIONS

NOTES ON A NIGHT HERON
COLONY BY JOHN FELKER
AND JACK STUPP.

The Night Herons arrived at the nesting site about April the eighth, and immediately commenced the arduous task of nest building. They located in Jack Oaks at about the height of forty feet and tore out all the old nests and began to build new ones. They build large and bulky, yet flimsy nests of all kinds of twigs and other material they can gather.

After seven days the first eggs were laid. Each nest contains about five eggs although as many as six or as few as three were observed. About fifteen nests were constructed from which no more than fifteen young birds were hatched.

The young appeared about two weeks after the eggs were observed. They have a striped coat not unlike that of the Bitterns.

During the day the male parents as a rule were absent from the nest, but the females remained and guarded the colony. The birds were very difficult to frighten away and would merely fly up into the air and flutter about until the disturbing parties left the vicinity, when they would immediately fly back to the nests.

The young were fed mostly on crabs and small fish of various species, mostly suckers and carp. The method used in feeding the young is regurgitation.

The long white plumes which are supposed to adorn the birds during the breeding season were not observable. They probably had worn off in the course of time.

Into this scene of ordinary domestic life was injected a tragedy. In July sometime the colony was exterminated by some gunner, and the bodies of the birds were left on the site to decompose. It is impossible to explain how any civilized man could commit this outrage.

OBSERVATIONS MADE DURING
THE PAST SUMMER BY FOSTER
AND ZAHM OF OUTSTANDING BIRDS.

June 29-Lark Sparrow, St. Louis
 July 17-Saint Louis to Knoxville
 American Egret - 25
 Little Blue Heron - 25
 Black Vulture - many
 July 18-Great Smoky National Park
 Purple Grackle
 Sycamore Warbler
 Carolina Junco
 Hooded Warbler
 Mountain Solitary Vireo
 Golden-crowned Kinglet
 Black-throated Green
 Warbler
 July 24-Least Tern, Creve Coeur
 July 31-Western Sandpiper, Creve
 Coeur
 King Rail, Creve Coeur
 August 8-Fish Crow, Mount Vernon,
 Virginia
 August 9-Ruffed Grouse, Annapolis,
 Maryland
 August 22-Yellow-bellied Flycatcher,
 Creve Coeur
 August 23-Long-billed Dowitcher,
 Horseshoe Lake
 August 24-Wood Ibis, University
 City
 September 1-Creve Coeur, 103
 species:
 Snowy Egret
 Connecticut Warbler
 September 22-Blue-headed Vireo,
 University City
 October 6-Leconte's Sparrow,
 Creve Coeur
 October 12-Lincoln's Sparrow,
 Creve Coeur
 October 21-Red-tailed Hawk,
 Osprey,
 Brown Creeper,
 Fox Sparrow, all at
 Creve Coeur
 November 2-Creve Coeur,
 Canada Goose
 Mallard
 Ring-necked Duck
 Lesser Scaup Duck

INTERESTING OBSERVATIONS
SINCE SEPTEMBER 30
BY TOM KIRKSEY

September 30 - Jackson, Miss.

Black Vulture, Raven, Logger-head Shrike.

October 1-10 - Gulfport, Miss.

Laughing Gull, Royal Tern, Caspian Tern, Brown Pelican, Sandpiper, Lesser Yellowlegs, Mockingbird, Baltimore Oriole, Great Blue Heron, American Egret, Reddish Egret, Least Bittern, Sora Rail, Carolina Wren, Osprey, Marsh Hawk, Sparrow Hawk, Mexican Cormorant, Florida Cormorant, Belted Kingfisher, Bald Eagle (?), Red-winged Blackbird, Boat-tailed Grackle, Louisiana Goldfinch, Tufted Titmouse, Mourning Dove, Turkey Vulture, Southern Meadowlark, Southern Robin, Bronzed Grackle, Rusty Blackbird, Pied-billed Grebe, Little Blue Heron, Snowy Egret, Nighthawk, Summer Tanager

October 18 - Reelfoot Lake, Tenn.

American Widgeon, Wood Duck, Coot, Great Blue Heron, Mallard, Purple Martin, American Merganser, Ring-necked Duck, Black Duck, Anhinga, Red-winged Blackbird, Double-crested Cormorant, Belted Kingfisher, Pileated Woodpecker, Pied-billed Grebe, Migrant Shrike, Red-shouldered Hawk, Slate-colored Junco.

EFFECTS OF THE DROUGHT AS BROUGHT OUT IN LAST MEETING OF ORNITHOLOGY GROUP

During the first two dry spells, Horseshoe Lake drew unusually large numbers of shore birds to its extensive mud areas that were exposed by low waters, while on the Mississippi river hundreds of ducks not ordinarily here after the latter part of April were seen in very large numbers as late as May 20, nearly a month overtime. The nests of Robins, which seemed to be the worst sufferers, and many other birds were so insecurely fastened to the branches due to lack of enough moisture in the mud to make it binding, that many nests fell to

(continued next column)

the ground after even moderate winds and rain storms, causing death and disaster to many nestlings, and sometimes strange motherings and adoptions of orphan birds. Robins preferred porch shelters to trees noticeably. The drying up of lakes and the complete disappearance of water from ponds, mudflats; and water holes, drove many birds to strange parts of the state in their search for water, thirst overcoming the shyness and wariness of certain species of birds and making them tame and fearless of the presence of man. One report was of 26 species coming to a bird bath so persistently that when the water was changed they would be back before the bucket was taken away again.

A flock of six Snowy Egrets appeared at Richmond, Mo., far north of their usual range, too thirsty to note the approach of a gunman and a bird observer from different directions, with the result that one of the birds was killed.

Near Lebanon, at one of the few water spots left in an area of five miles, large numbers of birds, from Gnatcatchers and Warblers to the Barred Owl, lined along the edge to drink, unmindful of spectators.

A number of Hummingbirds were found dead, and one was known to remain sitting on the edge of a water pan while it was carried for a considerable distance. Screech Owls came nightly to one bird bath for a week, to bathe their feet, regardless of a group of people within a yard of the bath to see the show.

Thirsty Quail who overindulge in drink after traveling for a long distance for water, dropped dead. Five Grackles were found on one lawn close to the bird bath.

The intense heat and dried grass resulted in many fires causing death and destruction to ground nests and young birds.

If the intense heat and drought keep up for another season it is practically certain that the bird population will be very seriously depleted.